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**From:** Nguyen, Kim <FTA>  
**To:** Schruth, Susan <FTA>; Libberton, Sean <FTA>; James, Aaron <FTA>; Nutakor, Chris <FTA>; Bell, John <FTA>; Fisher, Ronald <FTA>; Day, Elizabeth <FTA>; Ossi, Joseph <FTA>; Barr, James <FTA>  
**Sent:** 11/5/2008 4:53:27 AM  
**Subject:** Honolulu Rail Project

FYI. Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann was re-elected by voters last night. Voters also passed the rail initiative by roughly 51 percent to 46 percent to give the city the green light to move forward with the project.

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**From:** Tahir, Nadeem <FTA>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 05, 2008 9:21 AM  
**To:** Carranza, Edward <FTA>; Luu, Catherine <FTA>; Rogers, Leslie <FTA>  
**Cc:** Fisher, Ronald <FTA>; Nguyen, Kim <FTA>  
**Subject:** RE: inquiry - Honolulu rail project

for your info.

#### [HONOLULU MAYOR](#)

##### **Candidate Votes Percent**

Mufi Hannemann 168,345 58.0%

Ann Kobayashi 122,113 42.0%

#### [HONOLULU CHARTER: RAIL TRANSIT](#)

##### **Choice Votes Percent**

Yes 151,733 52.6%

No 136,854 47.4%

## **Hannemann coasts to victory - Incumbent speaks of 'daunting challenges' ahead for Honolulu**

By [Peter Boylan](#)

Advertiser Staff Writer

Following a contentious final month of campaigning, Mayor Mufi Hannemann was re-elected by Honolulu voters last night, handily defeating City Council member Ann H. Kobayashi.

The race turned out to be harder than many expected back in January, when Hannemann was an incumbent with a large campaign war chest and no apparent challenger. He was pushed to a run-off election by Kobayashi and University of Hawaii engineering professor Panos D. Prevedouros in the primary election. But Hannemann surged to a large lead early last night before coasting to victory.

"There are many daunting challenges our city faces. Let's do what's best for the people of Hawai'i," he said to supporters gathered at the Dole Cannery ballroom. "I have the greatest group of friends and supporters in the world. You folks have been here a long time and have been with me through thick and thin and I love you and will continue to work very hard for you. I thank you for sending us back to City Hall."

The victory allows Hannemann to keep his job and to oversee the initiation of the city's proposed \$4.28 billion rail transit system, which also won approval from voters last night. He returns to office at a time when the economy is faltering and property values are plummeting, forcing the city to prioritize capital projects while ensuring that city

services are operating efficiently.

The victory also raised questions about Hannemann's political future.

During the campaign Hannemann maintained that he would like the opportunity to consider a possible run for governor or the U.S. Congress in 2010.

## **Voters on Oahu say 'yes' to rail**

By [Sean Hao](#)

Advertiser Staff Writer

Frustration over congested roads outweighed concerns about costs as voters approved Honolulu's planned elevated commuter rail project yesterday.

The victory at the polls brings the city closer than it has ever been to building a commuter rail line. Three previous mass-transit plans over the past three decades failed for lack of political support.

But yesterday's vote, which favored rail by roughly 51 percent to 46 percent, should give the city the green light to move forward with the controversial \$4.28 billion project. Construction is scheduled to begin late next year.

The favorable rail results likely were bolstered by Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann's strong advocacy for the project and a major pro-rail advertising campaign.

Those voting for rail cited the need for transportation alternatives and traffic relief.

"I feel so bad for the people who live out there and have to come into town in this traffic," said Jane Himeda, who voted for rail at McKinley High School.

Those voting against rail cited concerns about the project's high cost, aesthetics and noise.

Waikiki resident Charles Gonzalez, 48, was first in line this morning at the Waikiki Community Center. He said he voted for Hannemann, but against rail.

"I like Mufi as mayor, but I think we have to look into rail more," he said. "They made the decision for steel-on-steel and where to go too quickly."

Gonzalez said the release of the rail project's environmental impact study on Sunday swayed his rail vote. He had been leaning toward voting "yes," but was concerned about how the key environmental impact study was released so close to the vote.

Over the weekend the city disclosed that the cost of the East Kapolei to Ala Moana system increased to at least \$4.28 billion, compared with a 2006 price of \$3.7 billion.

Rail gained momentum about three years ago when Mayor Mufi Hannemann proposed linking East Kapolei to Ala Moana via an elevated train. He won the endorsement of the City Council and the state Legislature, which adopted a 0.5 percentage point increase in the general excise tax to pay for the plan.

## **Seemed like done deal**

Most politicians supported it, and there was no plan to ask voters for their approval. The rail project appeared to be a done deal.

Then came Stop Rail Now, a coalition of rail opponents who launched a petition drive in April to put rail on the ballot. The group collected 49,000 signatures by mid-July. While Stop Rail Now eventually failed to get its ordinance on the ballot, it succeeded in forcing the City Council to place a separate version of the rail question before the

electorate.

The ballot question asked voters if they wanted the city to move forward with the steel wheel on steel rail transit system.

Hannemann last night attempted to reach out to the nearly half of the voters who opposed the project.

"All I ask (is) for those who still may disagree with it is let's find ways in which you can support this effort," he said. "The feeling has been that the people decide and the people have spoken."

Vocal rail critic Cliff Slater of Stop Rail Now said the 47 percent who voted against rail indicates there is still strong opposition to the plan.

"When you've got that many against you, that's hardly an indication of community consensus for rail," Slater said.

He said he will continue to oppose the project, but was not sure what form his opposition would take.

The ballot question is non-binding. It doesn't mean the city has to build the rail system; it only authorizes the city to do so.

Brian Manangan, 18, a Farrington High School graduate and Honolulu Community College student, said he voted against rail after talking with friends.

"It's too expensive," Manangan said.

Kapolei resident Kalei Kahapea, 18, voted for rail.

"It's another way to get from Point A to Point B without having to wait in traffic," he said. He also cited the economic benefits.

Other voters, including Nathaniel Jones, were hoping rail would pass.

"I'm originally from Pittsburgh and the rail system there gets you from the outskirts into town in 15 minutes," Jones said. "We need it here. We need something to relieve traffic for the people who live farther out of town."

A public vote in favor of the project could help marginalize the opposition while providing the project a boost.

## **'Good for Hawai'i'**

Rail proponents argue the system will give commuters an alternative to travel on congested roadways while reducing urban sprawl. The 19 planned transit stations also are expected to foster live-work-play communities and opportunities for moderately priced, high-density housing.

"We need something," said Rod Frias, 35, a construction worker who voted for rail at Palolo Elementary. "I don't think we can wait any longer."

Janice Chuck, 53, a teacher in Salt Lake also voted for rail.

"I'm in favor of rail because I think it's going to mean less traffic on the road," she said. "I think there's a lot of benefits."

"This is going to be good for Hawai'i."

Rail opponents argue it's a mistake to saddle the city with a massively costly project.

"I don't think the state can afford it," said Mike Rodrigues, 51.

The city plans to start construction late next year with limited service between West Loch and Waipahu starting in November 2013. Service between East Kapolei and Pearl Highland would begin a year later. Full service to Ala Moana would begin by the end of 2018.